THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Till recent past the policy of Coal India for seeking foreign collaboration was dictated by following two :

(a) Bringing in new technologies both in underground and opencast sectors.

(b) To seek bilateral funds for import of equipment which are not made in the country.

In view of the above, the areas in Underground sector where technology was brought in were longwall mining, shield mining, hydraulic mining, thick seam mining involving sub-level caving, Slasting Gallery for developed thick seams. Some import of technology was also done in shaft design, sinking and coal washeries.

In surface mining section, the areas for technology introduction have been in use of high capacity H.E.M.M. and to go for inpit crushing of coal/or lately emphasis is also on bringing foreign financial assistance to meet the investment requirement of Coal Sector.

(b) Following four major projects were taken up for implementation with assistance from erstwhile Soviet Union :

1. Khadia Opencast (NCL).
2. Nigahi Opencast (NCL).
3. Jhanjra Underground (ECL).
4. Modernisation of Patherdih Washery (BCCL).

The above projects are under implementation. The nature of assistance which was proposed to be given by the erstwhile Soviet Union was mainly in form of supply of equipment and rendering technical assistance during installation and operation of equipment. However, due to disintegration of Soviet Union, existing agreement could not be continued. The efforts are underway to establish cooperation with CIS countries.

(c) The foreign collaboration is mainly sought to acquire and absorb modern mining technology, procure sophisticated high capacity equipment, specialised management and training of personnel. The mining technology sought from foreign countries are given below :

(i) Longwall mining.

(ii) Blasting Gallery method.

(iii) Sub-level longwall caving.

(iv) Single lift longwall mining.

(v) Inpit crusher cum conveyor system.

(vi) Shield method of mining.

(vii) Shaft sinking.

(viii) Hydraulic method of mining.

(d) Technological modernisation in coal mining is a continuous process and for this purpose import of new technology, if required and not indigenously available, have to be obtained from other countries.

Unimpeded Access to American Financial Institutions

@ 1259. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India is likely to be targeted by US for possible sanctions if India does not allow unimpeded access to American financial institutions to set up operations ;

(b) if so, what was India's reaction thereto ;

(c) whether India has taken up the matter with US ; and

(d) if so, the reaction thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (d) The Super 301 provision of the US Trade Act which provided for the unilateral use of economic sanctions by the US Government for enforcement of US rights under trade agreements and for pursuing US economic interests in the areas of trade in goods and service including financial services, lapsed in 1990. A private number's bill to revive the Super 301 provision of the US Trade Act was introduced in the

@ Previously Unstarred Question 504, transferred from 7th December, 1993.

Senete and is at Committee stage. The attitude of the U S administration towards the bill is not clear as yet. Therefore, it is considered premature to take up the matter with the US administration at this stage.

Abolition of Value Based Advance Licensing System

@@ 1260. SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering abolition of value based advance licensing system and to introduce new procedure to refund excise and customs paid by companies ;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard ;

(c) what drawbacks have been noticed in the existing policy ; and

(d) what are the advantages of the new policy ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Non Payment of Salaries to MITCO Workers

1261. SHRI MD. SALIM : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the MITCO workers of Giridih and Jhuria Tilariya Factories have not been paid their salary for months ; if so, facts in detail giving the period for which the payment has not been made ; and the reasons for non-payment ;

(b) whether this is also true for the workers of the MITCO in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh ;

(c) whether it is a fact that in the period of non-payment to the general workers, payment was made for V.R.S to a large number of workers ; if so, facts in details giving the dates of payment made in the last two years till 1st December, 1993 and the amount spent on that and the number of workers who retired ; and

(d) reasons for not paying general monthly salaries while paying general monthly salaries while paying for the V.R.S. ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (d) MITCO has not been able to generate adequate funds to meet its commitments towards payment of salaries to its employees since may, 1993. However arrangements are being made to pay their salaries including arrears.

The total number of employees who opted for VRS and the amount paid towards VRS and the months of payment are detailed below :—

	1992-93	1993-94 (upto 1-12-93)
Number of employees who opted for VRS	417	137
Amount paid	385.47 (Rs. Lakhs)	148.31 (Rs. Lakhs)
Month of payment	July, 1992 July, 1993, Oct., 1992, March, 1993	

The entire amount was advanced by MMTC to MITCO to enable it to make the above payments. Separately, MMTC has also submitted a proposal to Government for release of this amount from the National Renewal Fund.

@@ Previously Unstarred Question 477, transferred from 7th December, 1993.